Office of Research and Development

Science Communication Handbook

Updated February 2015

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) relies heavily on scientific and technological innovation to protect human health and the environment. The Office of Research and Development's (ORD) cutting edge research is essential to the success of EPA's mission—ORD provides a critical foundation of science and technology to support the Agency's important work.

We must work together to promote the positive impact of our research on human health and the environment, and ultimately on people's lives. Communication is therefore a necessary component of everyone's work. Conveying the results of our research is a crucial step toward meeting our goals and objectives—excellent work done invisibly cannot have an impact.

A consistent approach to communicating ORD's contributions—using one strong EPA voice—will resonate with the public and our many internal and external partners. Communicating with one voice will facilitate greater public recognition of the value and contributions of ORD science, leadership and expertise. It will also increase awareness of EPA as a research institution and make our science more accessible and useful to everyone

The *ORD Science Communications Handbook* provides procedures and a tool kit for conducting internal and external communications. It is designed to assist all ORD staff with communications and enhance efforts to effectively communicate ORD's work and accomplishments.

Role of ORD Science Communications

Effectively communicating ORD's scientific contributions to the nation is critical to the success and relevance of our organization. Communicating results and outcomes of EPA research promotes a broad public understanding of the science that is used to make environmental decisions and builds national support for the Agency's research programs.

To increase visibility and impact, science communicators can provide support from the beginning to end for a science activity or product. Communication team members can provide support to senior leaders and staff in developing strategic plans to communicate products and outcomes to broad audiences.

The Science Communication Team in ORD's Immediate Office of the Assistant Administrator (IOAA) serves as the central office for coordination, planning, development, and review of all communication products. The Team also coordinates review and release with EPA's Office of External Affairs and Environmental Engagement (OEAEE) in the Administrator's Office. ORD's Science Communication Team works collaboratively with communication and Web staff in the Labs/Centers/Offices (L/C/O) to develop and implement communication programs and activities for ORD.

Effective Communication is Essential to:

- Accomplish ORD's long-term objectives and integrate research into the policy and regulatory activities of the Agency
- Raise public awareness and understanding of ORD's work

- Inform internal and external policy- and decision-makers of scientific results
- Encourage the country's best academic scientists to participate in EPA's research efforts

An Effective Science Communications Program:

- Provides accurate, timely, and balanced information that builds broad support and public awareness of ORD's research programs
- Supports internal employee communication and recognition programs that enhance prestige and improve job satisfaction
- Presents facts to defuse rumors and misinformation
- Coordinates community outreach programs to establish effective relationships with stakeholders

Strategic Communication Management

Like many other processes, strategic communication begins with an assessment of the current situation, often referred to as situational awareness. Situational awareness involves a constant analysis and genuine sensitivity about various factors and how they may affect the outcome of communication. Strategic communication considers:

- Public and media perceptions
- Perceived image versus desired image
- Community, government, and organizational climates
- Current events
- Media activity
- Known or anticipated attitudes of affected audiences

A Communication Strategy Worksheet (page 21-24) included in the tool kit of this handbook offers a step-by-step approach to conducting a situational analysis for internal and external communication needs. The worksheet can be used to determine what information should be elevated to higher organizational levels for consideration.

ORD's Science Communication Program

ORD Science Communication has three main functions: 1) external communication; 2) internal communication; and 3) community relations. Within each of these areas are numerous formal programs and separate activities critical to the success of information management.

1) *External Communication*

External communication involves creating strategic plans and coordinating outreach activities to clearly and effectively provide information to the public and partners about EPA's research. By using the right communication methods to reach our many audiences, external communication helps meet the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment.

External communication in ORD involves many activities, including:

- Web development and maintenance
- Media relations (e.g., press releases, interviews with scientists, social media)
- Event and exhibit coordination
- Communication product development (e.g., fact sheets, newsletters, brochures)

2) *Internal Communication*

Internal communication is critical for a large and diverse organization like ORD. Effective channels of communication within an organization are vital for achieving organizational goals and objectives. Keeping employees informed about organizational goals and activities builds understanding and support for our efforts.

All employees, especially managers, are responsible for internal communication. Communicators have an additional responsibility to develop practices to increase the effectiveness of internal communication. At present, some of these practices include:

- Updating and organizing content on ORD@Work
- Writing and emailing the EPA Research Compass, a bi-weekly internal newsletter
- Developing internal leadership videos
- Strategic communication

3) *Community Relations*

By reaching out to external audiences and building relationships, ORD can improve understanding of our programs inside and outside the organization. ORD staff conduct community relations activities when they plan and implement studies in communities and when they meet with stakeholders or visit schools to share information about environmental science. Activities include:

- Congressional/legislative affairs
- Develop public information (e.g. web content, fact sheets)
- Tours/visitor relations
- Exhibits for conferences and facilities
- Educational outreach
- Special events (e.g., speaker bureaus and Earth Day celebrations)

Science Communication Tool Kit: Putting Communication to Work for You

This tool kit is designed to help you conduct effective communications. It is a compilation of procedures and processes established for EPA and ORD to facilitate and guide efforts that communicate issues of importance – whether it is a high-priority report, study, meeting, or recognition of employee achievements and appointments. The tool kit will also help you develop effective fact sheets, news releases, Web sites, and other communication products.

The Science Communication Staff in the Immediate Office of the Assistant Administrator (IOAA) welcomes suggestions and comments on ways to enhance the tool kit to make it a more valuable resource for ORD communication.

Communication Products: Types, Submission Process, and Timelines

There are a variety of effective vehicles to communicate ORD's research and activities. The types of communication products, ORD review processes, and timelines are listed in the ORD Communication Product Table.

Concepts and final drafts of all non-technical communication products for the public, including web, print, email newsletters, and multimedia products must be submitted into the Product Review Tracking (PROTRAC) System for review by ORD's IOAA and OEAEE. The exception is press releases, which must be submitted directly to ORD's Media Lead and Communication Director.

Concepts must be approved prior to submission of a draft, and you should work through your L/C/O communication lead to enter anything into PROTRAC. Concepts and drafts are review by the ORD Product Review Officer and OEAEE. It is important to follow OEAEE guidance, which is available at http://www.epa.gov/productreview/index.html.

Access PROTRAC here - http://dchqdomino1.epa.gov:9876/oa/protrac.nsf

Technical and Non-Technical Products

To determine whether a communication product is technical or non-technical, refer to the ORD Communication Products Table on page 5 and the information on Identifying High-Profile Issues on page 8 in this handbook. Remember that high-profile issues of interest to the Administrator or ORD's Assistant Administrator need to be entered into SCOUT.

Review Process Check List

A check list is provided to ensure documents receive appropriate technical and communications review.

- Check the ORD Communication Product table to determine the review process and bring in L/C/O or NRP communication lead.

- Work with your L/C/O or NRP communication lead to obtain appropriate L/C/O or NRP approval.
- L/C/O or NRP communication lead submits concept into PROTRAC if appropriate.
- Determine if other EPA Program or Regional Offices need to be informed or engaged in development or review. IOAA encourages collaboration with other EPA offices on communication products.
- Verify that technical content has received quality assurance (QA) review.
- Send to reviewers listed in ORD Communication Product Table along with confirmation that document has received appropriate review and approval.
- L/C/O or NRP communication lead submits final draft into PROTRAC if appropriate.

ORD Communication Product Table

PRODUCT TYPE AND PURPOSE	SUBMISSION PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL	TIMELINE
News Release: A non-technical announcement approved and distributed by EPA's Office of External Affairs (OEA) to inform the media and public about significant research or activities. News releases should pass the "newsworthy" test.	Working with your L/C/O and NRP Communication Leads, submit to ORD Meda Lead for review. Media Lead will work with ORD Communication Director and OEA.	At least four weeks prior to anticipated release.
Desk Statement: A non-technical statement, generally three to four paragraphs in length, about ORD research or activities that have gained or are anticipated to gain media attention. Desk statements are used to inform ORD and OEA and provide an official response to the media and others. Occasionally, quick responses are needed.	Submit to ORD Science Communications Director through your L/C/O or NRP Communication Lead. Copy ORD's Media Lead.	Two weeks prior to anticipated need.
Internal Fact Sheet: A communications document that provides concise, clear, and straightforward information in non-technical language about a highly visible activity or issue. Fact sheets serve as background information for EPA and ORD managers and employees.	Submit to ORD Science Communications Director through your L/C/O and NRP Communication Leads.	Three weeks prior to anticipated need.
External Non-Technical Fact Sheet: A one- or two-page information document written in simple language to announce high-profile research, significant findings, reports, program overviews, and new programs or activities that would be of interest to the general public. They are used often in conjunction with news releases and other ORD announcements. Use ORD Science in Action template.	Submit to ORD Science Communications Director through L/C/O and NRP Communication Leads. Copy the ORD Media Lead. All final drafts will be reviewed for scientific accuracy by subject matter experts.	Three weeks prior to anticipated need.
External Technical Fact Sheet: A one- or two-page document that conveys scientific information in clear language of a technical nature. These fact sheets are targeted to a scientfic audience and not the general public.	Submit for clearance through your L/C/O/NRP Director AND your L/C/O and NRP Communications Leads. Prior to release, submit to	Varies depending on L/C/O process.

PRODUCT TYPE AND PURPOSE	SUBMISSION PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL	TIMELINE
Use ORD Science in Action Template.	ORD Science Communications Director as an FYI. Note: If topic is high profile (see ORD Communications Handbook), develop a non-technical fact sheet and enter into SCOUT at the red, yellow or green level.	
RARE Fact Sheet	TBD	TBD
Communications Strategy: A comprehensive plan that provides an outline of how to effectively disseminate information to targeted stakeholders. Strategies should be developed for major announcements at the minimum. Use strategy worksheet provided in ORD Science Communications Handbook.	Develop strategy with L/C/O or NRP Communication Lead. Submit to ORD Communications Director as FYI.	Four weeks prior to the launch of activities.
Talking Points: Concise, clear, and straightforward written statements that convey main points or messages about a topic or issue related to a high visibility topic not ready for public announcement or news release. They provide factual information and often represent a position statement on an issue. They are used as a basis for verbal communications, such as an interview or speech.	Submit to ORD Communications Director and ORD Media Lead through L/C/O or NRP Communication Lead.	Two weeks prior to anticipated need.
Q&As: An external or internal document that provides basic understanding of a study, activity related to a high-profile issue or news release. The language should be concise and targeted to the public.	Submit to ORD Science Communications Director, Special Assistant to the DAA for Science and ORD News Director.	Two weeks prior to anticipated need.
It All Starts With Science Blog Post: A blog designed to cultivate a regular readership interested in environmental science and engineering. Posts to It All Starts With Science feature personal, first-person blog entries from EPA researchers and other employees.	Submit topic to ORD Science Writer-Editor for approval prior to writing, with FYI to L/C/O or NRP Communication Lead. Submit draft blog post to ORD Writer-Editor. L/C/O and/or NRP Communication Lead will obtain Director-level approval as appropriate. All posts are reviewed by author/subject matter expert for accuracy prior to posting.	Topic at least two weeks in advance of desired post date. Draft due at least four business days in advance of desired post date.
Tweet on Twitter: An announcement of no more than 140-characters about ORD research and activities. Topics include news releases, live events, published research, public comment	Submit to ORD Social Media Lead. Social Media lead will work with NRP Communication Leads to	Can be issued immediately, however to maximize a tweet's reach (especially a tweet as part of a campaign)

PRODUCT TYPE AND PURPOSE	SUBMISSION PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL	TIMELINE
periods, tours, honors for EPA staff. A tweet should feature a Web link for further information, a relevant hashtag, and could include an image or video. Links will be shortened to minimize the character count.	obtain scientific review as appropriate.	advance notice is appreciated. Tweets are sent Monday through Friday (9am- 6pm) but the timing can be customized and tweets can be scheduled for specific times and days based upon audience.
Agency-Run Social Media (Facebook, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram) For Facebook, Google+, Pinterest, and Instagram, ORD's content is published on the main EPA accounts. ORD works with colleagues in OPA to get content posted. (See "Videos" below for Agency-run Youtube.)	Submit to ORD Social Media Lead. Social Media Lead will work with NRP Communication Lead to obtain scientific review as appropriate. ORD's Social Media Lead will then submit the item to the Office of Public Affairs main EPA account holder for review and posting.	Varies on social media campaign and platform, but generally three weeks notice before desired announcement date. Please work with your NRP Communication Lead and the ORD Social Media Lead early in your planning to ensure there is enough lead time to promote your announcement/activity.
Science Matters Podcasts: An audio broadcast that has been converted to an MP3 file or other audio file format for playback on computers or portable listening devices. Podcasting can be used to increase awareness of research.	Submit idea, background material, and draft script (if available) to Science Matters Editors through L/C/O or NRP Communications Lead. All scripts are reviewed by subject matter experts for scientific accuracy.	At least one month before desired publication. Accepted on rolling basis.
Videos: ORD occasionally uses short videos as part of communication campaigns, often posted on the Agency's Youtube. These videos take a lot of time, effort, and review, so before starting any work on a video, talk with your NRP Communications Lead to determine if a video is the best medium.	Work with NRP Communication Lead, who will coordinate with OPA and subject matter experts on development. All videos are reviewed for accuracy prior to posting.	Submit idea to NRP Communication Lead at least four months in advance.
Brochure: A communications product used for internal or external purposes to provide information on a subject matter, such as a research program, event, or other activity.	L/C/O or NRP Communications Leads submit concept and final product through PROTRAC. External brochures only.	Varies, but anticipate one week review for concept and at least two additional weeks review for final product.
Non-Technical Report: A non-technical product used to provide information to the public on accomplishments, program overviews, and other activities.	L/C/O or NRP Communications Leads submit concept and final product through PROTRAC.	Varies, but anticipate one week review for concept and at least two additional weeks review for final product.
Science Matters Newsletter: ORD's bimonthly external newsletter for non-technical audiences, which features timely, high-profile ORD research articles. Targeted to ORD partners and stakeholders, the scientific community, and others	Submit story ideas to Science Matters Editors through L/C/O or NRP Communication Lead. Final drafts are approved by the appropriate NPD and/or	Story ideas accepting on a rolling basis and via a weekly schedule with the NRP Communication Leads.

PRODUCT TYPE AND PURPOSE	SUBMISSION PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL	TIMELINE
interested in EPA research. Use journalistic style for articles incorporating clear and simple language.	L/C/O Director (or designee) and the Communication Director. All stories are reviewed by subject matter experts for accuracy prior to publishing.	
ORD Internet: ORD Science Communications Staff provides daily oversight and works with the Office of Science Information Management (OSIM) to manage Web content on ORD's research.	Submit concepts and final drafts for new or redesigned Web sites through PROTRAC, working with your L/C/O or NRP Communication Lead. Consult Jacques Kapuscinksi or Sean Dowd during development of new or redesigned site.	As needed.
ORD@Work: ORD Science Communications Staff contributes to content on ORD@work, an intranet Web site.	Submit content suggestions to: ORD Communications Specialist for Web Content and OSIM's Information Management Support Branch.	As needed.
EPA Research Compass: A biweekly newsletter delivered to an internal ORD audience every other Thursday. This newsletter keeps employees informed of what is going on within ORD.	Send short write up (about three-four sentences) plus any relevant links to EPA Research Compass Editors.	Write up needed by noon on the Tuesday before the Compass is sent.

SCOUT and High-Profile Issues

L/C/Os are required to notify ORD IOAA about any research or related activities that impact policy or that are the subject of heightened public or media interest. By keeping management informed about significant activities under development before they occur, L/C/Os enhance opportunities for effective collaboration across EPA and recognition for the contributions of ORD's employees.

The primary vehicle for communicating high-profile issues is through EPA's tracking database, SCOUT. Media requests should be coordinated with the ORD Media Lead rather than entered into SCOUT. All L/C/O Communication Directors should have access to SCOUT.

High-Profile Issues and Activities that Require SCOUT Entry:

1. Highly Influential Scientific Assessment (HISA). A HISE is a scientific assessment that could have a potential economic impact of more than $500 million in any year, and/or is novel, controversial, precedent-setting, or has significant interagency interest. A scientific assessment is an

evaluation of a body of scientific or technical knowledge that typically synthesizes multiple factual inputs, data, models, assumptions, and/or applies best professional judgement to bridge uncertainties.
2. Influential Scientific Information (ISI). ISI is scientific information that has or will have a clear and substantial impact on important public policies or private sector decisions. These include products or scientific information that support major Agency regulatory decisions.
3. Other high-profile journal articles and products. These include scientific findings, journal articles, and reports that have heightened public or media interest, or are of interest to EPA's Programs or Regions. A product is considered high profile if it:
    a. May draw the attention of Congress;
    b. May attract the attention of the national mass media;
    c. Relates to a Presidential initiative;
    d. Could affect pending or established EPA regulations or policies;
    e. Was requested by a program or regional office for making a policy decision;
    f. Will be of particular interest in a specific community; or
    g. Is of high interest to other agencies or governments.

Remember that HISAs, ISIs, journal articles, and scientific and technical work products must be entered into the Science Inventory. Please contact your Science Inventory Coordinator for guidance.

Identifying High-Profile Issues

The following questions should be asked when considering whether an activity is high-profile. Is the answer is "yes" to any of these questions, inform the IOAA Science Communication Staff and consider entry into SCOUT. Communication materials for some of these activities may be developed.

1. Has a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request been submitted to the L/C/O?
2. Has a Federal Register notice of a high-profile issue been prepared by the L/C/O?
3. Will a draft or final report on a high-profile activity be distributed to the public or external stakeholders?
4. Will a high-profile study be presented at a key external meeting?
5. Will a public meeting be held to discuss a study or study results?
6. Will the study be visible in a community?
7. Does the study involve human subjects?
8. Is there a public debate on an issue that related to the high-profile activity?
9. Is the research groundbreaking, new, or first of its kind?
10. Does the research provide a new or improved product or technology that addresses a timely issue?
11. Has research been accepted in a major scientific publication that is followed by the media (i.e., *Science, Nature, Journal of American Medical Association)*?
12. Will the research be featured or publicized by the journal or affiliated organization?
13. Has the research received a major national award or recognition?
14. Has the research received high-profile attention at a major conference?
15. Is the research the subject of a news conference?
16. Has a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) been established with non-EPA organizations?
17. Will there be a major grant to an outside organization?

SCOUT Color Designation

RED: Action requires active involvement of the Administrator's Office or is likely to draw a significant level of external interest. All HISAs should be designated red.

YELLOW: Action is being handled at the Assistant Administrator or Regional Administrator level. All ISIs should be designated yellow.

GREEN: Activities that the L/C/O have identified as important to track until completion.

What are SCOUT milestones?

SCOUT is designed to track an overarching action and its individual milestones. Every action should have at least one milestone. In the case of a major speech or stakeholder meeting there may be only one milestone – the speech or meeting itself. The designation associated with specific milestones (red, yellow, or green) may be different than the overarching action type. For example, an action may be red with milestones that are red, yellow, or green.

How should L/C/Os coordinate SCOUT entries of collaborative research?

ORD's research is integrated across L/C/Os to leverage our resources and scientific expertise. Major research activities that require action and milestones in SCOUT across L/C/Os should be coordinated and entered as one overarching action. This will ensure that the IOAA is notified of all SCOUT-significant research in a study area. Under an overarching action, such as "Near Roadway Research," each L/C/O should enter all its relevant milestones. A lead L/C/O should be identified to create the overarching action. Each subsequent milestone should be entered by each L/C/O responsible under the overarching action.

Communicating with Congress

Communicating with members of Congress and their staff is an important component to ORD's overall communication strategy. Interactions with Congress provide an opportunity for ORD to educate members and their staff about its important research programs and obtain an understanding of the interests and concerns of Congress.

There are several types of committees in both the House and Senate that serve different functions. Authorizing Committees develop and oversee authorizing legislation from major acts such as the Clean Air Act and well-known focused legislation. Appropriation Committees are in charge of setting the specific expenditures of money by the government of the United States.

EPA communicates with Congressional members and staff in several ways. In general, the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations (OCIR) serves as the Agency's principal point of contact for Congress, expect for Appropriation Committees. For Appropriation Committees, the Agency's interactions are managed by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). In ORD, the Office of Resource Management and Administration (ORMA) works with OCFO on appropriation issues. The discussion here does not focus on interactions relating to appropriations.

Among other thing, OCIR coordinates EPA's formal positions and technical assistance to Congress, monitors all relevant legislative actions (e.g. bills, reports, regulations) related to EPA programs, and coordinates Agency appearances at Congressional hearings and manages associated testimony.

ORD's Congressional Liaison works with OCIR on Congressional communication and interactions. These interactions may be initiated by Congress and may come from a committee or individual member. These include:

- Requests for ORD staff to appear as witnesses at hearings before a Congressional committee
- Requests for ORD staff to provide briefings on specific topics
- Requests for ORD staff to provide technical assistance (usually relating to draft legislation) and information

In an effort to educate Congress on the work that ORD is doing, ORD may, through OCIR, ask to provide briefings to Congressional staff. In addition, ORD L/C/Os may request a member of Congress to attend an event (e.g., a conference, tour of a lab facility, etc.). ORD's L/C/Os should work with the ORD Congressional Liaison on these requests.

Requests by ORD to meet with Congressional staff in Washington, D.C., are coordinated by the ORD Congressional Liaison, working with OCIR. Requests from the local district for a member of Congress or their staff to attend an event at an ORD facility can be handled by the communication/Congressional point-of-contact in the L/C/O. In most cases, the L/C/O communication staff will work directly with the member's district office and keep the Congressional Liaison informed. If a L/C/O is contacted by the district office of a member, the L/C/O should respond to the member's staff and notify the ORD Congressional Liaison. The ORD Congressional Liaison is responsible for notifying OCIR of such activities.

Media Relations

Media relations is the term used to describe activities and programs that involve print, Web-based, or broadcast media. ORD works with the media in partnership with the Administrator's Office of External Affairs and Environmental Education (OEAEE) to increase public awareness of ORD science and science-related activities.

Media Inquiries

If you receive a media request, contact the ORD Media Leads and your L/C/O Communication Lead for guidance before responding. The ORD Media Leads will work with OEAEE and ORD-IOAA, and the L/C/O Communication Lead will ensure that management is informed.

The ORD Media Leads will work with OEAEE to choose the most appropriate expert to provide a response and to get Press Secretary approval of requests and responses. The ORD Media Leads will also work with ORD staff and L/C/O and NPR Communication Leads to finalize ORD media responses and to gain appropriate ORD-IOAA reviews and approval.

OEAEE will staff interviews and give the appropriate L/C/O Communication Directors and NRP Communication Leads and the ORD Media Leads the option to sit on any phone or in person interviews.

Follow these tips to prepare for a media interview - http://intranet.ord.epa.gov/comm/media-and-press

ORD Media Leads record all media requests on a daily basis in Vocus, a Web-based tracking system for media relations used by the Science Communication team. These entries should be kept up-to-date and include dates of completion.

Press Releases

Press releases are issued to announce or highlight significant activities that are newsworthy. Press releases must be submitted to ORD's Media Leads at least four weeks prior to the target release date. The ORD Media Leads must add the press release topic to OEAEE's press planner at least two weeks in advance of issuance. Coordinate draft development with ORD Media Leads, who will get the final draft approved by ORD-IOAA before sending to OEAEE. All press releases must be sent to OEAEE two weeks prior to being issued. ORD Media Leads will work with OEAEE, ORD's Communication Director, and L/C/O and NPR Communication Leads to finalize the press release following OEAEE review.

If the press release is a joint announcement with another EPA office, an Agency press release template should be used. If the press release is a joint announcement with another governmental organization, logos of EPA and the other organization should be used with the EPA logo at the top left. EPA does not issue joint press releases with the private sector. If the private sector issues a press release on an EPA activity or product, the draft press release needs to be approved by L/C/O communication directors and the ORD Media Leads.

How to determine if a press release is desirable:

- Determine if the topic is newsworthy (see "What is News?" on page 15).
- Determine the potential interest of target audience for release (i.e., national, regional, local, and trade).
- Consider if news is national or regional in scope – the ORD Media Leads can work with EPA Regional Public Affairs Directors to issue a regional press release.
- Consult with your L/C/O and NRP Communication Director to determine newsworthiness. The L/C/O or NRP Communication Lead will work with ORD's Media Leads to determine OEAEE's level of interest and possible treatment of the information.

Steps to developing and distributing a press release:

- Obtain L/C/O Communication Director and Media Leads input and approval for concept.
- Discuss objectives and target audience with the Media Leads.
- Draft press release and obtain approval from L/C/O management.
- L/C/O Communication Director provides name of spokesperson, telephone number, and availability to ORD Media Leads.
- Supporting Web content is required for all press releases and should be posted prior to distribution of press release.
- L/C/O Communication Director submits the L/C/O approved draft to ORD Media Leads for review.
- ORD Media Leads obtains final approval from ORD IOAA.
- ORD Media Leads determines if release can be distributed by OEAEE and coordinates announcement timing. L/C/O Communication Director will be kept informed of status.
- ORD Media Leads distributes the final press release to key personnel in EPA and ORD (e.g., IOAA, L/C/O management, OEAEE, and Regional Science Liaisons) prior to distribution to media or as soon as possible after media distribution.

- L/C/O Communication Director and spokesperson need to be available after press release is distributed, particularly the day of the release and the next business day.
- Posting a complementary tweet on Twitter should be considered to raise awareness that a press release has been issues. The tweet should be an interest-grabbing short statement that is 140 characters or less, including the URL. Note: The press release title may or may not suffice. A question can be very successful in getting Twitter followers' interest (e.g., "Is roadway pollution harmful to your health? Learn more with a recent study: URL"). Tweets can be issued at any time during the day.

Tips to Writing an Effective Press Release

- Use OEAEE template for press releases.
- Keep press releases short and simple. Short sentences and short paragraphs are critical.
- Use active words.
- Use the Associated Press Stylebook.
- Headline and first paragraph are the most critical elements of a press release.
- Headline should provide information about the announcement and be one line only.
- Lead sentence should tell the story immediately. Use questions as leads sparingly. Should be 30-35 words long.
- First sentence should explain "what and why."
- Quote should be no deeper than the third paragraph. Quote should be used to deliver a message, express an opinion, or issue a call to action and not be used to deliver facts or statistics.
- Message, action, and content should be within the first three paragraphs.
- All news releases must direct reporters to a relevant Website where additional information can be obtained. Post fact sheets, reports, and other supporting documents on the Web prior to distribution of the press release.

What to do about press releases by other organizations:

Contractor Press Release - EPA awards contracts to organizations for equipment and services. Often contractors prepare press releases to announce the award of a contact. EPA does not have authority over this contractor activity. ORD can request notification of distribution of a press release and ask to review for accuracy. Contractor releases should not imply EPA endorses the organization or product. Quotes from ORD employees should not be provided for use the contractor press release as it may imply endorsement. ORD employees are reminded that under 5 CFR 2635.702 "you shall not use your public office for your own private gain, for the endorsement of any product, service, or enterprise, or for the private gain of friends, relatives, or persons with whom you are affiliated in a nongovernmental capacity."

Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) Press Release – CRADAs are established between EPA and research partners to exchange personnel, equipment, services, and expertise for a specific research project. As part of the agreement, organizations may be required to notify EPA of any planned distribution of a press release and provide a copy of the release for review prior to distribution. A CRADA release should not imply EPA endorses the organization or product or provide opinion of EPA policy. Quotes from ORD employees can be included in the press release if they address the purpose of the CRADA and goals and objectives of EPA.

Grant Recipient Press Release – ORD funds environmental science and engineering research grants and fellowships that complement EPA's intramural research programs. As part of the funding, grant recipients are required to notify EPA of any planned distribution of a press release and provide an opportunity for review. A grantee release should not imply EPA endorses the organization or product or provide opinion of EPA policy. Quotes from ORD employees can be included in the press release if they address the purpose of the grant and goals and objectives of EPA.

Desk Statements

Desk statements are the written basis for official Agency responses about EPA activities that have gained or are anticipated to gain considerable media attention. Desk statements are also prepared to provide the basis for official responses to external issues, which the Agency may be expected to comment on, such as letters by stakeholders or press releases by other organizations.

Desk statements provide brief background information and important main points. The statement should be one to two paragraphs long, with additional background info if necessary. The first few sentences should describe the issue, and the last should provide important points about the issue. It should also include the name and contact numbers for technical experts and/or media spokespeople for the topic. A contextual URL should also be included.

Desk statements are used by OEAEE to respond to media inquiries and may be read or emailed to media depending on the situation. There is generally urgency to develop a desk statement as it will allow the Agency to respond to breaking news. OEAEE will often issue only one to three sentence desk statements to the media. Desk statements should be prepared in advance, prior to the release of a high-visibility report, risk assessment, public meeting, or manuscript, even when a press release is not anticipated. anticipating media attention, discuss a plan of action and needed communication materials with the ORD Media Leads.

The NRP Communication Leads must approve all desk statements before sending to the ORD Communication Director; the NRP leads will be responsible for assessing whether the NPD or others need to review. For high profile issues, the ORD Communication Director will make sure that the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science is informed.

Press Events

Press events should be reserved for the most significant announcements within an organization. Press releases are a more efficient and effective way of reaching the public on more routine announcements.

Proposed press events must be submitted by the L/C/O Communication Director or NRP Communication Lead to the ORD Media Leads and Science Communication Director.

When considering a press event, questions to ask include:

- What is the purpose of the press event?
- Who is available to attend?
- Is the location suitable?
- What is the best time for a press event? (Mid-morning is the preferred time for media)
- Why is a press event desirable over a press release? Is there something visible that must be shown versus described in a press release?

- Are there any controversial issues surrounding the announcement, and, if so, what steps will be taken to assist with responding to them?
- Is the subject considered to be a major news interest? If not, a press release may be more effective.
- Does the public have broad interest in the topic?
- Is the topic of interest a local issue, located near where the event will be held?
- Is it routine information that could be more easily and effectively shared in a press release?
- Are there nationally recognized speakers or elected officials available who would attract media interest?
- Is news breaking fast and a press conference the only way to communicate effectively?

Also see Press Event Checklist, at the end of the Media Relations section.

Onsite Visits by Media

All onsite media visits must be coordinated with the ORD Media Leads, the Science Communication Director, and OEAEE must be notified. A communication representative should escort media at all times during an onsite visit. All subject matter for photography or taping requested by media must be approved for use by OEAEE, the ORD Science Communication Director, and the ORD Media Leads prior to an onsite interview. L/C/O management should also be informed and give permission to photograph or tape a lab, office, or equipment. Release forms of non-EPA employees must be obtained prior to any photography or videotaping. This includes SEE employees and contractors.

No cameras or videotaping are allowed in animal housing units, since these are restricted areas.

All health and safety procedures must be followed during a media visit. Certain areas may be restricted because of safety issues. Visitors should wear safety glasses while visiting any lab. No visitors are allowed in laboratories when chemicals are in use. Be mindful that the EPA logo should be visible (e.g., on lab coats or equipment) to serve as a brand when filming occurs.

EPA has secure facilities with specific procedures in place for coordinating the registration of visitors. Please coordinate any media visits with your security office.

What is News?

News identification is a crucial activity to the success of a public affairs and communication program. The following checklist for spotting news is a tool that can be used to engage management and staff in helping to identify news in an organization. News should also be considered in the context of current affairs (what is of interest to the public) and organizational objectives.

What is News Checklist:

- Results of new science or technology (timed with publication of manuscript or report)
- Current research activities in the field (e.g. beach water quality study) especially when the researchers will be visible to the general public
- Launch of a new major study of critical importance to EPA

- New initiatives or research focused on emerging environmental issues of public interest
- Significant organizational change (e.g., new center, division, research strategy)
- New or improved facility
- Awards and recognitions
- Anniversaries
- Special events (e.g., conference, public meeting, open house, groundbreaking)
- EPA officials speaking engagements
- Federal Register Notices are often news items as they announce an activity by EPA
- Accomplishments and activities of employees involved in educational outreach or other volunteer activities. Appropriate for "hometown" news.
- Executive appointments to professional organizations or societies (e.g., President of Society of Toxicology)
- Human interest stories about employees

Media Relations Using Vocus

Vocus is a Web-based public relations software service used by ORD to manage communication and media relations to communicate science and technology to non-technical audiences. OEAEE also has a Vocus subscription, but ORD's Vocus system is separate.

Final ORD communication products should be entered as collateral in Vocus by ORD Media Leads.

For Vocus assistance, call 866-675-2525, view the online tutorials, the online chat function on Vocus's website, and for more information, contact ORD's Media Leads.

Press Event Checklist

Name of Event:	Lab/Center/Office Communications:
Purpose:	OPA contact:
Date/Time:	Regional Communications:
Location:	Program Communications:
Participants:	OCIR contact:
Contacts and telephone numbers:	

LONG-RANGE PREPARATIONS

OFFICE	ITEM	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	Notify (program, region and other offices); set up event team		
	Determine and reserve location		
	Reserve materials, for room, including: Podium, audio setup, seating, flags/seal, graphics/props, banners, translator, signer, security/escorts/directional signs, name tags/table tents for participants, sign-in sheets and people		
	Determine participants/draft proposed agenda		
	Issue invitations		
	Determine additional information to be prepared for Internet		
	Prepare fact sheet/draft talking points		
	Determine graphics/props		
	Create graphics/props/banners		
	Determine what materials will be in press kits and who will be responsible for them		
	Determine follow-up contact for press calls after the event; talking points for press calls		
	Determine if preliminary interviews are desirable; editorial boards; radio; TV – schedule as needed		

(Continued on next page)

Press Event Checklist *(continued)*

SHORT-TERM PREPARATIONS

OFFICE	ITEM	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	Confirm participants		
	Finalize agenda		
	Prepare press advisory		
	Notify elected officials: Congressional State Local Other		
	Prepare remarks (speechwriter)		
	Prepare speaker packet (maps, schedule, background, etc.)		
	Prepare press kits		
	Prepare press release		
	Confirm physical arrangements; prepare directions and map for event location; logistics before and after event; etc. Notify security at event held at any EPA facility.		

AT EVENT

OFFICE	ITEM	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	Ensure room setup, audio, etc., is correct. Ensure proper signage to event and/or greeters to take people to event location.		
	Distribute news release and/or press kit at event		
	Web posting (speech, press release, front page or program or region)		
	Distribute news release to media after press event		
	Physical cleanup		
	Media follow-up		

Social Media

"Social media" refers to web-based and mobile technologies that people use to share information and ideas online, such as Facebook and Twitter.

These technologies let people create and share content in innovative and interesting ways. Social media offers many exciting possibilities for government agencies to communicate and collaborate with the public. It allows people to share new ways to use information that offer new insights or ways to solve problems.

EPA is using social media technologies and tools in the firm belief that by sharing and experimenting with information we greatly increase the potential for everyone to gain a better understanding of environmental conditions and solutions. But at the same time, we also make every effort to proceed deliberately, for example, to observe any requirements related to federal activities such as transparency, public process, or privacy. EPA doesn't endorse any particular social media site or technique.

Learn more at http://www.epa.gov/epahome/socialmedia.html

Social Media Channels

To communicate EPA research, we use a number of different channels to share our scientific work and its relevance to the public. Social media is most effective when part of a comprehensive communications plan. To explore raising awareness of your work via social media, please contact your L/C/O Communication Director and/or contact Melissa Anley-Mills (ORD-IOAA Science Communications).

Below is a listing of the mostly commonly used social media by ORD to externally communicate our research:

For a full listing of EPA's social media accounts, visit: http://www.epa.gov/epahome/socialmedia.html

Twitter

- What is Twitter? https://twitter.com/about
- ORD has had an active Twitter account @EPAresearch since 2009, and we've steadily been building a following of science enthusiasts and environmentalists from around the world. ORD issues several tweets per day that share research web content, Science Matters newsletter content, research news releases, public webinars about our science or RFAs, insights from speeches by our experts, and live tweeting from field research, scientific conferences, or science events. Tweets also respond to questions and engage in conversation with our followers.
- To see the @EPAresearch Twitter feed go to http://www.twitter.com/eparesearch - we also embed the @EPAreserach Twitter feed on www.epa.gov/research
- Please contact Melissa Anley-Mills and your Communication Lead if you have information to share via Twitter.

Facebook

- What is Facebook? http://www.facebook.com/facebook?ref=pf
- The official Agency Facebook site http://www.facebook.com/#!/EPA

- ORD has a presence on Facebook through EPA's main Agency Facebook account: https://www.facebook.com/EPA. ORD also has a People, Prosperity & the Planet (P3) Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/#!/epaP3
- Please contact Melissa Anley-Mills and your Communication Lead if you have information to share on Facebook.

YouTube

- What is YouTube? http://www.youtube.com/t/about_youtube
- EPA has a one YouTube channel: http://www.youtube.com/user/USEPAgov
- Videos posted on EPA's Youtube channel follow the Agency's product review process and must go through PROTRAC. It also requires the following form File: Checklist for Getting Your Video Posted to EPA.doc , and we recommend working with your Communication Lead before starting any work on creating a video for the public.

Pinterest

- What is Pinterest? http://about.pinterest.com/
- EPA will be launching a Pinterest account: https://www.pinterest.com/epagov/
- Guidance: Pinterest 101 provides an overview of Pinterest, suggestions for ORD's use of the social networking site; a glossary of Pinterest terminology and information about the types of images we'd like to feature.

Reporting Errors on Official EPA Social Media Accounts

In the event that you see an error or inaccuracy in an official EPA-ORD account post or tweet, please contact Melissa Anley-Mills (IOAA Science Communications) immediately via email, telephone, or through that account service directly and provide the corrected information. All suggestions will be confirmed, and, if an error was made, a correction will be made through that service.

Personal Use of Social Media (Ethical and Legal Considerations)

Social media is a wonderful tool for connecting with family, friends, and professional colleagues. EPA staff may have social media accounts, but be aware that, as federal employees, we have certain ethical and legal considerations that extend to how we may communicate and present ourselves on personal social media platforms, even outside of work. The use of social media can implicate ethics concerns such as misuse of your Government position, misuse of Government resources, and the Hatch Act (political activity by Government employees).

All employees should be familiar with the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (PDF), which applies even during personal time. You cannot disclose information about EPA rules, regulations, and other work that is nonpublic information (5 CFR 2635.703). Additionally, think carefully about how you state opinions about EPA because people might assume that you are an authoritative person about EPA or representing EPA just because you work here.

EPA's 2010 Wide World of Ethics & Social Media training is an excellent resource that covers EPA employees' ethical obligations and focuses on how they apply to one's use of social media whether for personal or official purposes.

Social media experts recommend adding a personal use disclaimer if you use media for personal reasons (e.g., Twitter, YouTube, Facebook). This clarifies that you are posting your own opinions. Even though you're acting in your own personal capacity, you're still an employee of the Federal Government. In your profiles, consider adding language such as: "Tweets are my own" or "Posts are my own opinions", "What I share is my own opinion and not endorsed by any organization."

Additional Resources

- FAQs from U.S. Office of Special Council regarding political activity. Note a section on personal use of social media.http://www.osc.gov/haFederalfaq.htm
- "Hatch Act: Dos and Don'ts for Feds on Social Media ", a GSA-hosted webinar (archived: here: April 2012. http://www.howto.gov/training/classes/hatch-act-social-media
- Social Media @ EPA: Personal Use http://blog.epa.gov/socialmedia/?cat=44

If you need further help, please contact Melissa Anley-Mills (ORD-IOAA Science Communications) or talk to your Ethics Officer or the Office of General Counsel. For more information, seethe EPA Ethics program.

Web

EPA's Internet site – www.epa.gov – is the Agency's primary public interface. Its pages are a fundamental part of every Agency program and is the foundation for EPA's environmental outreach. Many people want to understand the breadth of EPA's research on a particular topic, and the research pages (www.epa.gov/research) should provide a gateway to that information. If topic pages already exist, L/C/Os and Research Programs should add their content to these pages rather than develop new Web pages.

Web Approval

ORD's Information Management Support Branch in the Office of Science Information Management (OSIM) and the ORD Science Communication Director are responsible for reviewing and approving all new ORD Web pages and those that have been significantly revised to ensure they are in compliance with EPA's Web guidance.

You should submit the concept and final draft for new or redesigned Web pages through **PROTRAC** via your L/C/O or Research Program Communication Lead. You should also work with your L/C/O Webmaster before submitting. Your L/C/O Communication Lead will help you determine if your new web area will be part of an existing Web research area or be submitted as part of the Agency's One EPA Web planning process. For more information please see Step –by –Step Guide for moving your Web Content into Drupal. http://intranet.ord.epa.gov/administrative/itresources/web-and-content-manager-resources/ord-public-internet-site-management-1

Please note that you must enter all Public-facing Web applications (e.g. models, databases, support tools) into PROTRAC. Please contact Ann Vega in the Office of Science Information Management for more information and consult your Web Master.

For updates on the ORD research pages:

- Homepage: Contact Moira McGuinness, ORD Communication Specialist
- National Research Program pages: National Research Program Communication Lead
- L/C/O pages: L/C/O Communication Lead/Director

Web Resources

- One EPA Web (http://intranet.epa.gov/oneepa/web/) Internal EPA information for Editors-in-Chief (EIC), Web Council members, and other EPA web communications staff (annual web planning process or reviewing sites before they are launched).
- One EPA Web: Transforming Web Content Step-by-Step Guide for Editors-in-Chief http://intranet.epa.gov/oneepa/web/stepbystep.html
- EPA Web Guide (http://www2.epa.gov/webguide) has information about EPA policies, practices, and guidance for all EPA web work
- Product Development and Review Process: http://www2.epa.gov/product-review

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Communication Strategies

A communication strategy is a comprehensive plan that outlines how to effectively disseminate information to targeted audiences. We should create a communication strategy for every major report, risk assessment, white paper, research plan, or other high-visibility activity that EPA will announce to the public through a press release, community meeting, news conference, Federal Register notices, Web announcement, or other avenue.

Format

Use ORD's communication strategy template, available at the end of this section.

Approval Process

Communication Leads should work with L/C/O and Research Program Directors to identify the need for and development of communication strategies. Communication Leads should obtain review and approval of any strategy from the L/C/O Director's office.

All communication strategies should be submitted to the ORD Science Communication Director.

Contact

L/C/O or Research Program Communication Lead

Strategic Communication Worksheet

Devising an excellent science communication strategy best begins with a clear definition of the specific success or outcome desired. Excellent communication strategies are factual, credible, timely, effective, flexible, and farsighted. To create a more effective strategy, you should analyze current events, attitudes, climates, and perceptions as they relate to the work you want to communicate. This knowledge will help you create a strategy that is appropriate to the current message environment and will help you avoid communication missteps by proactively thinking about how people may react to your messages. See the following for questions to ask and information to take into account when creating a communication strategy.

A communication strategist can begin a project by answering the following questions:

1) Why is the project important?
2) What impact does the project have or could the work have in the future?
3) Who will be affected by this project?
4) Who will be interested in this project?
5) What is our definition of communication success?
6) How will we measure communication success?

Situational Awareness

Understanding the environment in which your communication messages will appear is key to a successful campaign.

Some questions you may consider while to gain situational awareness include:

1) Is the project related to organizational missions, goals, and objectives?
2) What current events may affect our project?
3) What attitudes affecting our agency or project exist among various potential stakeholders or audiences?
4) Which attitudes or perceptions must be addressed?
5) What facts are currently available, and how might they be misinterpreted?
6) How can misinterpretations be corrected?
7) What new facts can be presented?
8) What are the current social, political, cultural, and organizational climates affecting our project?
9) What are the best messages, mediums, and forums; who are the best spokespersons to address attitudes and perceptions that affect specific climates?

Current Events

Knowledge of current events can help ensure that a communication strategy is effective and flexible enough to adapt to changing factors. Strategic planning is often hampered by the lack of available reference to an accurate central calendar of known or anticipated organizational events. Sometimes the simple knowledge of internal or external current events involving specific dates, times, or locations allow us to consider how that information potentially relates to our project, which in turn may help determine the optimal window or media for effective communication. In the case of science communication, other events taking place such as scientific conferences, sudden major news events, or meetings on Capitol Hill may adversely affect our timing and odds of success.

Attitudes, Climates, and Perceptions

History has shown that information is powerful, even when that information is not correct. Attitudes, climates, and perceptions are often shaped by individuals or organizations that create or distort information to achieve their own agendas.

A major challenge to government communicators is to overcome the use of misinformation through fair, objective, and balanced presentation of facts.

To be most effective in strategic communication, consider answers to the following additional questions.
1) What are our own assumptions about attitudes, climates, and perceptions that affect the shaping of our communication?
2) What are the agendas and sensitivities of special interests that are influencing opinions of others?
3) How might such agendas wrongly interpret our communication/presentation of facts?

Creating Your Strategy
By answering most of the preceding questions, a planner can begin to see a logical course of action to develop a communication strategy. Such answers will help determine important themes and messages, target audiences, the most desirable media and messengers, and the most effective measures of success.

Once a strategy is developed, it must be coordinated, observed, and measured for its success. Ideally, coordination ensures that anyone remotely affected by the action is fully informed and thus becomes aware of his or her role, if any, in supporting the strategy.

Download the Communication Strategy Template here:

Strategy Template
Use the template below or download it here - http://intranet.ord.epa.gov/sites/default/files/media/documents/comm/Communications-Strategy.docx

Title of Project:

MAIN MESSAGE:

HOW THIS HELPS THE EPA MEET ITS MISSION:

Official Title:

Contacts:
Technical Leads: (name, telephone number, e-mail)

Public Affairs/Science Communications Lead: (name, telephone number, e-mail)

Project Announcement Date:

1. Overall Strategy: *(One or two paragraphs that describe the document or activity and how it will be communicated. Example: ORD will publish and distribute a report on the findings of a* *study. The report will be announced at a press event, posted on the Web, and distributed to key stakeholders.)*

2. **Background:** *(One or two paragraphs that provide the context for this activity, including purpose of activity, goals and objectives, issues surrounding the activity, and any controversial issues. This section should provide answers to "who, what, where, when, and why.")*

3. **Message Points:** *(Bullet format of main talking points for use in communicating to target audiences.)*

4. **Anticipated Reaction:** *(One or two paragraphs that describe expected reaction by audiences based on conversations with stakeholders and strategic analysis of issues pertaining to this activity.)*

5. **Communications materials to be developed:** *(Select all that apply.)*

COMMUNICATIONS MATERIAL	RESPONSIBILITY
Internal Fact Sheet	
External Fact Sheet	
Talking Points	
Internal Q&As	
Desk Statement for Media	
News Advisory or News Release	
Brochure	
PowerPoint Presentation	
Web Content (required)	

6. **Notification Plan:** *(This is an example. Fill in contacts as needed.)*

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACT	PERSON(S) TO BE CONTACTED
ORD Offices: *(select all that apply)*	
Lab/Center/Office Director	ORD Assistant Administrator
Administrator (or delegate)	
Science Communications Staff	IOAA
	Regional Science Liaisons
	ORD Executive Council
	ORD Management Council

ORD News Director	Lab/Centers/Office Management ORD Public Affairs and Science Communications
EPA Region(s): *(select all that apply)* ORD Assistant Administrator Administrator (or delegate) Regional Science Liaison Science Leads ORD News Director	Regional Administrator Regional Contacts Regional Leads Regional Public Affairs Director
EPA Program Office(s): *(select all that apply)* ORD Assistant Administrator (or delegate) Science Leads ORD News Director	Assistant Administrator, Program Office Program Office Contacts Program Office Communications Directors
Stakeholders: *(select all that apply)* **Congress: (required)** ORD Congressional Liaison/OCIR **Partners:** **States:** **Industry and User groups:** **Environmental/Public Interest Groups:** **Other Federal Agencies:** **Professional Societies:** **Academia and Educational Organizations:** **Media:** ORD Media Leads/EPA Office of External Affairs	Congress

Other Resources for Communication

Print and Multimedia Manuals

- EPA's Communication Product Standards Stylebook – The stylebook provides guidance for most media, including print documents, audiovisual, broadcast, and exhibit work. It does not directly address news media, such as press releases. http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/stylebook.pdf
- Visual and Products Standards Graphics Manual – The manual defines ORD's standards and guidelines for print products, including fact sheets, brochures, and reports. Examples of print product templates and a color palette used by ORD are included. http://intranet.ord.epa.gov/comm/templates/vig
- ORD Product Table (page 5-8) – This simple table includes the communication channels for EPA Research, who to contact to use them, and what the review process and timelines look like. See http://intranet.ord.epa.gov/sites/default/files/media/ordatwork/IOAA/ORD%20Communication%20Product%20Table%20Jan%2027.pdf

EPA Seal and Logo

The Agency's seal and logo convey the corporate identity of EPA and its programs. All products must reinforce the visual identity of EPA; program and office identifiers are distinctly secondary to this identity. EPA's Communication Product Standards Stylebook provides information about the Agency's seal and logo. http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/stylebook.pdf

Electronic versions of the seal and logo with signature in various formats can be found at: http://www2.epa.gov/product-review/using-epa-seal-and-logo

Wikis

A wiki is a website where users can add, modify, and delete content. EPA uses wikis to collaborate with the public (and internally) on a variety of different projects. The Office of Environmental Information develops wikis. General information about wikis

Blogs

EPA began blogging in 2007 and continues to use blogs and discussion forums to expand the conversation about environmental protection. "Greenversations" is EPA's collection of public blogs and discussion forums covering a wide variety of topics. General information about blogs.

Contact Aaron Ferster if you want to blog for ORD.

EPA Blogs:

- EPA Connect - EPA's official leadership blog
- It's Our Environment - EPA's blog about our world
- Stanley and Stella Explore the Environment - Learn and help protect our world
- State of the Environment Photo Project - share your images for the archive
- It All Starts With Science - about EPA's environmental science and scientists
- The Eco Student - all the great things students are doing to help the environment
- Environmental Justice in Action - efforts to achieve environmental justice in overburdened communities
- The Energy Star Current - sharing ideas for saving energy

- Greening the Apple - environmental protection in and around New York City (EPA's Region 2)
- Healthy Waters for EPA's Mid-Atlantic Region - protecting waters along the central eastern seaboard (EPA's Region 3)
- The Big Blue Thread - a blog for spatial science and the environment in America's heartland
- Conversando acerca de nuestro medio ambiente - discutirán temas de interés para la comunidad hispanohablante (discussing topics of interest to the Hispanic community)

Copyright Information

The use of images on the web often brings up copyright questions, and they can be surprisingly difficult to answer. When considering the use of images, be aware that in the realm of copyright, an image is the same as a document, so the following discussions apply to images, even thought they typically refer to documents.

The Office of General Counsel, has provided two documents that can help us to deal with the copyright of images. One is a list of answers to common questions about copyright, the other is a comprehensive document from the Office of General Counsel called Copyright Issues of Special Interest to EPA Employees

Read more on the Web Workgroup's Copyright site - http://intranet.epa.gov/webgroup/committees/graphics/copyright.html

Children's Privacy and Copyright Issues

EPA Order 2190.2A1, August 9, 2004, titled "Children's Privacy and Copyright Issues," establishes the policy for protecting the privacy of children on EPA's Public Access Web site. It concerns the collection, both online and offline, of information from childrens ages 13 and under, and the display of personally identifying information about children on the Web site. It also addresses copyright issues related to children's products submitted to EPA.

For more information, visit http://intranet.epa.gov/oei/imitpolicy/qic/ciopolicy/2182.p.pdf

FOIA

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires all Federal agencies to disclose records requested in writing by any person. The FOIA applies only to federal agencies and does not create a right of access to records held by Congress, the courts, or by state or local government agencies.

Each federal agency is responsible for meeting its FOIA responsibilities for its own records. All FOIA requests to EPA are received by and filed with the Agency FOIA Officer. When EPA receives a FOIA request, the Headquarters FOIA Office assigns a tracking number. The FOIA request is then passed on to the individual EPA offices (OARM, for example).

That is why ALL FOIA requests must be forwarded to the Agency FOIA officer. No individual is allowed to respond to a FOIA request unless specifically authorized to do so.

The OARM FOIA coordinator assigns all contracts related requests to the Office of Acquisition Management (OAM). The FOIA requests are tracked at the Assistant Administrator level.

For more information, visit http://oamintra.epa.gov/?q=node/238

Section 508

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220) requires federal agencies to develop, procure, maintain and use electronic and information technology (EIT) that is accessible to people with disabilities - regardless of whether or not they work for the federal government. The U.S. Access Board established the Section 508 standards that implement the law.

Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) is any equipment or system that is used to create, convert, duplicate or access information and data. Examples of EIT include, but are not limited to:

- Telephones, smart phones, and mobile devices
- Televisions, DVD players, and videotaped productions
- Internet and Intranet websites
- PDF documents
- Content on DVDs and CDs
- On-line training
- Webinars and teleconferencing
- Technical support call centers
- Remote access websites and tools
- Tablet, laptop, and desktop computers
- Software and operating systems
- User guides for software and tools
- Copiers, printers, and fax machines
- Calculators
- Lab equipment

For more information about Section 508, please refer to EPA's Accessibility site, the Access Board's Section 508 website, or the Federal Government's Section 508 website maintained by the General Services Administration (GSA).

Multimedia Release Form

Photography or video of any nonfederal employees such as a contractor or public citizen for use in government communication materials requires written permission by the individual or guardian. A multimedia release form can be accessed below.

Multimedia Release Form

I hereby give the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permission to use (check applicable categories) _____ photographs, _____ videotapes or motion pictures, _____ sound recordings (taken or recorded at the date and location described below) for nonprofit governmental purposes, including, but not limited to, environmental education and awareness.

I understand that this permission includes, but is not limited to, publication of this material by EPA or other governmental or nonprofit agencies in printed materials, television or radio broadcasts, or Internet/intranet Web sites. I also understand that government publications cannot be copyrighted and can be republished, adapted, and used by anyone without permission and even for some commercial adaptations.

I further understand that I will not be compensated for such use.

____

Date and Location

______________________________________ ______________

Signature Date

______________________________________ ______________

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian of Minor Child(ren) Date

Address: ______________________________________

____

____

Telephone: ______________________________________

Disclaimer Requirements

Anytime you teach, speak, or write about EPA for nongovernmental publications, you must include a disclaimer that you are expressing your own views and not those of EPA. Disclaimers are not required for internal communications or government publications. For more information on ethics issues pertaining to writing for nongovernmental organizations, visit the Office of General Counsel's website at http://intranet.epa.gov/ogc/ethics.htm

For more information on ethics issues, visit your Lab/Center/Office Ethics Officer.

Disclaimer Text Examples

Disclaimer example if the article was written as a work-for-hire assignment:

This article was written by NAME under contract to the EPA and edited by NAME, EPA. The article does not necessarily reflect the policy positions of the Agency.

Disclaimer example if the article was written by an EPA employee:

This article was written by NAME, TITLE, of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The views expressed are her own and do not necessarily reflect the policy positions of the EPA.

Disclaimer for articles in nongovernment publications:

Although this text was reviewed by EPA staff and approved for publication, it does not necessarily reflect official EPA policy.

Disclaimer of endorsement example:

Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government and shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

Disclaimer of liability example:

With respect to this multimedia document, neither the United States Government nor any of their employees makes any warranty, express or implied, including the warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights.

Funding disclaimer example:

Although the research described in this report has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, it has not been subjected to the Agency's required peer and policy review and therefore does not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency and no official endorsement should be inferred. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the investigators who participated in the research.

Information quality guidelines (IQG) disclaimer example:

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Conferences

Communications Group Exhibition Space Conference Requirements

1. Perform market research to identify the cost of a future exhibit at the conference event. This functional requirement may include, but is not limited to:
   - exhibition space costs,
   - display of rental items,
   - temporary exhibition furniture and various equipment rental devices, audio visual support, information resource technology items such as monitors, DVR players, internet service support, etc., and
   - meeting support, including the shipping and handling of EPA materials to and from the conference location.

2. Evaluate if travel costs for booth staffing will be incurred by IOAA and request preliminary approval for travel through the ORD Communication Director. If the Director provides preliminary approval, submit a travel request in Gov Trip or contact your travel representative for assistance with this activity.

3. Submit for approval by the ORD Communications Director all conference cost breakdown information, except the Federal travel expenses, identifying those items that directly relate to exhibition activity at the future conference event.

Request for the Approval of the Conference Spending Request and the Purchase Request Funding Package

1. Fill out and submit a completed EPA Form 5170, Conference – Related Activities Spending Request to the ORD lead for conference costs. The 5170 should identify all conference related costs including travel expenses. Respond to any future requests from the conference cost lead for specific conference financial information.

2. Using the ORD online purchase card system the cardholder is able to process a purchase card task order. With the cardholder's approving official's approval, and the Funds Certifying Officials (FCO)'s certification of funds, the cardholder is able to place an order. Cardholder's maximum order amount is limited to or below the micro-purchase threshold of $3,000.

3. If the conference service support dollar amount exceeds $3,000, only a Headquarters Procurement Operations Division (HPOD) Contracting Officer will be able to acquire the services through a purchase card order or a simplified procurement order. Please verify the purchase request has been processed through the EAS and the Contracting Officer has made the award before the conference event.

Important Note(s):

A purchase cardholder or a Federal Communication Division staff is prohibited from signing any order requiring the cardholder to accept a vendor's terms or sign a vendor's agreement or contract. Only a Contracting Officer is delegated procurement authority allowing them to sign these documents.

Receive a copy of the cardholder's order or Contracting Officer's conference purchase order.

III. Administration and Close-out of the Exhibition Space Order -

1. Bring a copy of the conference exhibition equipment/ service purchase order to the conference show booth site.

2. Once the cardholder has placed the services/equipment order, any changes from the awarded order for additional supplies or services must be approved by authorizing officials and then processed by the cardholder before the Government can receive the benefit. Additions to or changes to the cardholder's or Contracting Officer's order by Federal employees constitutes an unauthorized commitment. This unauthorized commitment is a violation of under both Agency and Federal Acquisition Regulations.

3. If changes to the cardholders purchase order are necessary and would exceed the authority of the $3,000 maximum order limit, these actions must be routed through the Office Director for approval and then forwarded to the HPOD Contracting Office for processing before the Government receives the benefit..

4. Review all contractors provided receipts against the purchase orders to accurately process future bill payments.

5. Following the conference event, notify the Contracting Officer that the supplies and services provided under the order have been delivered or provided. If any of the contract line items ordered were not required or provided during the event, notify the Contracting Officer by e-mail to amend the requirement and request a modification to the order.

6. Notify the purchase cardholder that the Agency received all conference purchase order supplies and services. This notification allows the purchase cardholder to allocate the bank funding (invoice payment). If any items under the purchase card order were not provided at the conference event, request the cardholder to adjust the order.

7. If actual costs were below those reported on EPA Form 5170, please send an EPA Form 5170a to conference@epa.gov (no management approvals are required). If actual conference costs exceed the estimates on the approved EPA Form 5170, please resubmit the Form 5170 through the approval chain prior to providing an approved EPA Form 5170A to conference@epa.gov.

Important Note(s):

Because of the complexity of planning and procuring of conference support items, be cautious to not ask for or any changes to the items ordered under the cardholder's purchase order or the

Contracting Officer's order. These conference purchases require close scrutiny to ensure only the necessary expenses as ordered are provided by the contractor.

When at the conference locations do not sign hotel agreements or contracts. Any form of contract which may contain a statement of work or other type of agreement can only be signed by a Contracting Officer. If the facility staff continues to insist on a signed contract, refer the request to the HPOD Contracting Officer.

IOAA Conference Spending Approval Checklist:

- Research cost and location of conference, including:
  - exhibit space,
  - display rental if needed, furniture and equipment rental (i.e., monitors, DVR players, etc), internet service, and electricity
  - shipping and materials handling to and from the conference.
- Evaluate if travel costs will be incurred by IOAA for booth staffing and request preliminary approval for travel from the ORD Communications Director. If preliminary approval is provided, submit travel request in Gov Trip or contact your travel representative for assistance.
- Submit all costs (except travel) related directly to exhibiting at a conference to the ORD Communications Director for approval
- Fill out and submit EPA form 5170 to the ORD lead for conference costs, which includes travel; also, respond to any data calls from the conference cost lead about financial information for specific conferences
- If the cost associated with each vendor is under $3,000, then use the ORD online purchase card system to process a purchase card task order. If the cost associated with a vendor is over $3,000 you must contact a Contracting Officer (CO) to fill out an order through EAS (EPA Acquisition System) in order to ensure approval and funding for all spending before the conference.
- Once funding approval has been acquired through either the ORD purchase card system or EAS, the cardholder or CO can make all purchases associated with the exhibit such as furniture, equipment, or materials handling.
- Ask the cardholder or CO to submit booth and equipment/services contract paperwork along with the payment to the conference and appropriate show vendor(s).
- Review all receipts to ensure the correct payment has been made and that all balances are covered. Notify the cardholder or CO about whether or not the supplies and services paid for were delivered or provided.
- Fill out EPA form 5170 A with actual expenses after the show, when all expenses have been paid and all receipts have been received. If the cost is below the estimate, send straight to

conference@epa.gov. If the cost is above, you must resubmit a 5170 to the same approvers before sending the 5170A to conference@epa.gov

Reminders:

- Do not attend the conference or obtain equipment or any services from vendors prior to receiving funding approval.
- Do not agree to or sign any agreements with a vendor for services, these should only come from a cardholder or CO.
- Bring copy of all purchase orders to the conference
- Once the cardholder has placed the services/equipment order, any changes from the awarded order for additional supplies or services must be approved by authorizing officials and then processed by the cardholder before the Government can receive the benefit.